



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



RUSSIAN FEDERATION PAYS COURTESY CALL ON THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the Republic of Guinea and Sierra Leone, Alexey V. Popov has today Monday 05/02/2024 paid courtesy call on the Speaker of Sierra Leone Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu in his Chambers at Parliament building in Freetown.

Welcoming the Russian Ambassador, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said he was delighted and was looking forward to the Ambassador's visit with great expectations. He recalled his last visit to Russia when Speakers from African countries were invited to grace an occasion by the authorities in Russia aimed at strengthening the continent's relationship with the Russian Federation.

The Russian Ambassador, Alexey V. Popov thanked Mr. Speaker for the visit and informed him that he had already presented his letter of credentials to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Timothy Kabba and would do same to President Bio during the course of the week. Commenting on the hospitality of the people of Freetown, the Ambassador extended an invitation to Sierra Leone to observe Russia's forthcoming elections and that President Putin had given him the task to build and deepen multilateral relationships with African countries. Backed by actions, he said President Putin was ready to assist in political, social and economic cooperation between Russia and African countries. He also spoke about provision of Russian scholarships for

Sierra Leone's students to study in Russia, agricultural support and that plans were underway for reestablishing Russia's permanent diplomatic mission to the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Given Sierra Leone's placement as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, he called on Sierra Leone to support Russia's bid for a review of the Rome Statute, establishing the International Criminal Court responsible for trying war crimes and crimes against humanity. He also said that if Zelensky was to be given a platform to address the AU, it would affect Russia's relations with African countries.

He also said Russia was only targeting military installations in Ukraine, unlike Israel which was targeting and killing over 30,000 unarmed civilians in Palestine. And ended by speaking on the need for strengthening and facilitating cooperation between the parliaments of Russia and Sierra Leone.

Reacting, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu called for the immediate cessation of hostilities and end of the war between Russia and Ukraine as the war had devastating consequences on weak and smaller nations of the world. Wishing the Ambassador well on his tour of duty, he said he would go through the documents submitted to understand the issues raised therein and would respond accordingly. He called for the immediate reopening of the Russian embassy in Sierra Leone, and noted that if an MoU was brought to Parliament by the executive, appropriate action would be taken by the House to give it legal status. He also said that Sierra Leone would continue to support the existence of the ICC created to adjudicate on issues relating to war crimes and crimes against humanity. He called on belligerents to spare civilian population in line with international laws and the immediate restoration of peace between Russia and Ukraine. He said that he was gratified that Russia had extended an invitation to Sierra Leone to observe its forthcoming elections, unlike others who did not do so, and wished them a successful and smooth election in Russia.

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